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Istook Hails New Work at Tinker as Savings for Taxpayers

Washington, D.C. -- Congressman Ernest Istook (R-OK) today hailed both the quality and the savings of the new paint facility dedicated Friday at Tinker Air Force Base, after several years of planning and work. Istook says it not only brings work to Tinker, but also clears a bottleneck and saves money for taxpayers.

Istook was instrumental in getting funding for the \$15-million facility, which he had added to appropriations bills for fiscal years 1995 and 1996. The Clinton Administration was going to delay several more years before making a decision about the project, Istook said, until the Congressman took action. He says it's a "win-win" situation for Tinker and for taxpayers. After the dedication ceremonies last Friday, Istook toured the facility and liked what he saw.

"This facility will do more than just provide jobs for Oklahomans; it will also save taxpayers several million dollars a year," said Istook. **"Until now, Tinker didn't have enough facilities to strip off the old paint and then re-paint all the airplanes it repairs and maintains. There was a lot of extra dis-assembly and re-assembly, so they could fly the planes to Alabama for paint work, then bring them back to Tinker to finish the maintenance work. This has been very expensive for taxpayers.**

"By keeping all this work in Oklahoma, taxpayers save the cost of taking things apart and putting them back together extra times, and of flying them across the country for paint work," said Istook. **"I'm also delighted that an Oklahoma company, AeroSystems of Edmond, got the contract for some of the major equipment. These are four huge automated man-lifts, mobile work platforms suspended from the ceiling, which move the workers around to work on the aircraft."**

Approximately 60 aircraft will be painted each year in the new facility. The workload will require an average of 30 painters and personnel per shift for a standard 24-hour day, 5-day workweek operation.

"The hard-working men and women at Tinker Air Force Base are a credit to Oklahoma and to America," said Istook. **"Investing in Tinker helps everyone: giving jobs to Oklahomans, making our military stronger and more efficient, and saving the taxpayer money."**